



To be submitted to the Council at its meeting on the 18<sup>th</sup> March 2021

## **TOURISM AND VISITOR ECONOMY SCRUTINY PANEL**

**3rd December 2020 at 10.00 a.m.**

### **Present:**

Councillor Brookes (in the Chair)

Councillors Abel, Callison, Freeston, Green (substitute for Rogers), Hyldon-King, Mickleburgh and Parkinson.

### **Officers in attendance:**

- Laura Cowie (Scrutiny and Committee Advisor)
- Wendy Fisher (Estates and Business Development Manager)
- Carol Heidschuster (Townscape Heritage Project Manager)
- Stella Jackson (Heritage Action Zone Project Manager)
- Guy Lonsdale (Finance Group Manager)
- Helen Thompson (Investment Manager, Economy and Growth)
- James Trowsdale (Strategic Manager)

### **SPTVE.27 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

There was an apology for absence from Councillor Rogers for this meeting.

### **SPTVE.28 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest received in respect of any item on the agenda for this meeting.

### **SPTVE.29 MINUTES**

The minutes of the Tourism and Visitor Economy Scrutiny Panel meeting held on 15<sup>th</sup> October 2020 were agreed as a correct record.

### **SPTVE.30 QUESTION TIME**

There were no questions from members of the public for this meeting.

### **SPTVE.31 FORWARD PLAN**

The panel received the current Forward Plan and members were asked to identify any items for examination by this Panel via the pre-decision call-in procedure.

RESOLVED – That the Forward Plan be noted.

### **SPTVE.32 TRACKING THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF SCRUTINY**

The panel received a report from the Director for Communities tracking the recommendations of the Tourism and Visitor Economy Scrutiny Panel.

Miss Cowie advised the panel that all items within the tracking report had either an update included or were scheduled for future panel meetings.

A panel member asked if there was any further update on the Historic Vessels item as they were concerned at how long it may take for funding to come forward to save them. Mrs Thompson reminded the panel that an update was brought to the panel back in July and there had been no changes. Mrs Thompson reassured members that there was a conservation management plan in place for the vessels and they were monitored and checked daily to ensure there was nothing fundamentally wrong. Securing the funding was proving challenging, especially this year due to COVID, and sourcing the funds had been paused due to other emerging priorities, but as soon as this work was able to continue, officers would apply for any grants or sponsors available to ensure the future of the vessels.

RESOLVED – That the tracking report be noted.

### **SPTVE.33 QUARTER 2 FINANCE MONITORING REPORT**

The panel received a report from the Director of Resources and Governance providing key information regarding the council's provisional financial outturn at quarter 2 as considered by Cabinet at its meeting on 4<sup>th</sup> November 2020.

Mr Lonsdale summarised the key findings from the report and highlighted some of the areas of growing concern, specifically around the reduction in council tax collection rates and the impact of COVID-19 likely to be with us for some time. We were reporting a overspend of £0.7 million, which was an improvement of £1m from the first quarter; and Mr Lonsdale confirmed that given the current climate forecasting was proving even more challenging.

Mr Lonsdale highlighted three key areas within the panels remit as follows:

- The council were in the middle of administering grants to businesses to support the hospitality and leisure sector.

- The capital spend with Economy and Growth had a £1.3m underspend due to the open to culture scheme being unable to proceed as a result of COVID-19, but this funding was being carried forward to the next financial year.
- The council continued to work closely with Lincs Inspire with regard to libraries and leisure facilities; they were currently awaiting further information from the Government about what ongoing support would be available for the sector.

Mr Lonsdale covered the forthcoming budget round, including the comprehensive spending review which was announced the week previous. It was noted that this would only be a one-year settlement due to the uncertainty at the moment.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

### **SPTVE.34 HERITAGE ACTION ZONE**

The panel received a briefing note from the Heritage Action Zone Project Manager providing an update on the latest position.

Ms Jackson gave the panel a presentation which supported the briefing note in more detail. The presentation covered the aims and activities of the project and the key funders which help contribute to the project's success. Ms Jackson highlighted a select few pieces of work ongoing within the Heritage Action Zone (HAZ) including Peterson's smokehouse (opposite building 89); work would hopefully be starting on site in the new year to create offices and a possible café. There was already an interested party enquiring about taking the building on. There would also be a creative workspace including a studio and exhibition space which would be available for hire for anything creative. Ms Jackson reassured members that there was lots of activity planned for the Kasbah next year. Next was Corporation Bridge, this was under conservation repair but remained open and in use. Phase 1 had begun with a specialist doing a lot of work in background. Lastly was West Haven Maltings, as reported recently Onside Youth Zone was interested in taking on this space to create a place for children to go partake in various activities and have someone to talk to. Safeguarding works had been completed and the building was now ready for contractors to move on site.

Ms Jackson then covered the public realm scheme including St James Square, Garth Lane and the new Heritage Trail. She concluded by covering the museums and attractions, including the Heritage Centre, Time Trap and Grimsby Minster.

Members welcomed the comprehensive update and were excited to see everything coming together and progressing well. Members queried if the funding from the Humber LEP had all been allocated, as the council would soon be linking with the Greater Lincolnshire LEP. Ms Jackson confirmed that the funds from Humber LEP were used for Garth Lane and St James Square and the funds were indeed secure, as for the

future, Ms Jackson explained that she would need to discuss with the Humber LEP if they would continue to be a HAZ partner.

RESOLVED – That the update be noted.

### **SPTVE.35 CLEETHORPES TOWNSCAPE HERITAGE INITIATIVE**

The panel received an update on the Cleethorpes Townscape Heritage Initiative from the Project Manager.

Mrs Thompson acknowledged that this was the first update to the panel in a while and reminded the panel that this was part of the wider Cleethorpes Regeneration Programme which was solely focused on its heritage.

The panel received a presentation from Ms Heidschuster on the scope, funding streams and public realms works. She gave examples of current applications in progress. The programme focused on conserving and enhancing historic buildings on Alexandra Road and Sea View Street.

The panel welcomed the update and expressed their delight at seeing what the buildings had historically looked like and were keen to see the programme develop. Members queried the reference to the current owners of the former Empire Theatre, and that it would be their responsibility to maintain the upkeep. Ms Heidschuster informed the panel that she had been talking to the current owners about possible options, including exploring a community interest company where match funding would more likely be available. The Architectural Heritage Fund (AHF) had a grant available of up to £15k which would enable them to work with the architects on concept ideas. The AHF were receptive to an application should the owners decide to take a leap of faith, but ultimately they currently wanted to maintain full control of the building and make a go of it themselves. Without match funding, the external repairs covered in the presentation would not be possible.

The Chair thanked Ms Heidschuster for her detailed and concise presentation and found the update very informative and subject to COVID-19 restrictions, it was suggested that the panel should visit the historic buildings within the programme in the future.

RESOLVED – That the update be noted.

### **SPTVE.36 TOURISM AND VISITOR ECONOMY DASHBOARD**

The panel received a report presenting some of the key economic statistics and data for tourism across the borough, as taken from the Scarborough Tourism Economic Activity Monitor (STEAM) report.

Mrs Thompson explained to the panel that due to COVID-19 there had been delays with obtaining the data, and the information the panel had in front of them was for 2019. Mrs Thompson reassured members that she

was hopeful to have more up to date figures available earlier in the year next time. With regard to the data, Mrs Thompson noted that there was very little change from 2018 to 2019, but it presented a very accurate picture that the panel may wish to track annually. The data covered key trends, economic impact, visitor numbers, total visitor days and overnight stays. In terms of qualitative information, it had not been possible to gather anything from visitors during 2020 because of the pandemic, but they were hoping to be able to do this during next year's tourism season.

Mrs Thompson then gave a brief presentation on the latest footfall data for the area. This was obtained by the use of three footfall counters which were positioned at the intersection outside McDonalds in Grimsby, outside Boots in St Peter's Avenue and the Central Promenade in Cleethorpes. The data was encouraging in that, despite the pandemic, the visitor numbers remained high and on trend.

The panel were hopeful that if events were allowed to take place next season, the visitor numbers and overnight stays would increase. Mrs Thompson was also hopeful and informed members that the intention was to create packages for attractions and days out with overnight stays included and this would be one of their main objectives for the next season.

RESOLVED – That the update be noted.

### **SPTVE.37 MOTORHOMES 'AIRE' SITE**

The panel considered a briefing note from the Estates and Business Development Manager providing an update on proposals to explore options to provide a dedicated overnight motorhome parking 'aire' site within the resort.

Members welcomed the update and felt that the aire site was a good idea as there was currently no provision for motorhomes; it would increase tourism and economy and the number of overnight stays in the resort. A member highlighted some issues that motorhome owners came across when arriving at any resort, including the lack of large parking space, and barriers on car parks which restricted their access. It was suggested that daily parking would be beneficial too. Mrs Fisher acknowledged the members comments and agreed to take these on board. She explained that she had also been engaging with the motorhome community for their comments.

The panel also raised concerns over such a site, and the risk that it may be misused by travellers. It was suggested that any future plans would need to be scrutinised by the Economy Panel. Mrs Fisher agreed and confirmed that it would be stipulated that the site would need to be fully managed in any disposal or leasing agreement.

A member suggested the land next to Wonderland as a motorhome had been spotted there previously. Mrs Fisher explained that to begin with, they explore options of Council owned land, which this site was not; but she was willing to take this away and explore. Mrs Fisher agreed to bring a future update back to this panel after a marketing exercise had been completed.

RESOLVED –

1. That the update be noted.
2. That the Estates and Business Development Manager bring a further update back to this panel once a marketing exercise had been completed.

### **SPTVE.38 QUESTIONS TO PORTFOLIO HOLDER**

There were no questions for the portfolio holder at this meeting.

There being no further business, the Chair declared the meeting closed at 11.47 a.m.